

VZCZCXRO8851

RR RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR
DE RUEHCH #0626/01 2221530
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 101530Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8273
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000626

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM MD

SUBJECT: COMMUNISTS CONSIDERING PLAN TO LET
NON-COMMUNIST COALITION TAKE OVER GOVERNMENT

REF: Chisinau 614

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Party of Communists has been discussing its strategy which will be formalized in a meeting of the Party Plenum, likely to take place o/a August 17. Though the decision has not yet been finalized, the PCRM will likely give the 53-member coalition of four non-Communist parties the additional eight votes they need in order to have the 61 required to elect a president. In an August 7 meeting, President Voronin's inner circle advisor Oleg Reidman discussed with Pol/Econ Chief the latest PCRM thinking on how to move forward in the current political environment, underlining that it was most important to elect a president and avoid continued political crisis. By law, the Parliament must hold its first session within thirty days of the elections, i.e. by August 28; Reidman expected that the first Session would be held on the 28th. End Summary.

Eight PCRM Votes to Support Coalition Candidate

¶2. (C) In an August 7 meeting, President Voronin's Economic Advisor Oleg Reidman, who is also a PCRM MP and member of the party Central Committee, told Pol/Econ Chief that on August 5, the PCRM faction of 48 MPs elected to the new parliament had met in order to discuss their options. The faction contains those who were elected on the party list, including some non-party members, and thus differs significantly from the Party Central Committee, although it includes many of the party's key leaders. Reidman said that since blockading the presidential vote or opposing the coalition's candidate would leave Moldova in a state of political crisis that would require repeat elections in 2010, the group had decided upon recommending to the Party Plenum a plan of giving the four-party coalition candidate the eight votes necessary to elect a new president.

¶3. (C) Reidman stressed that the candidate would have to be a unified candidate, supported by all four of the non-PCRM parties. The PCRM faction would not give its eight votes to a candidate if the non-Communist side did not have full agreement on its choice. Reidman said that this move would be coordinated in advance, with eight deputies designated to provide just the eight votes needed -- and not one more, he said. Although President Voronin (Ref A) had suggested that the PCRM might insist that the joint candidate be a person who

does not belong to any political party, Reidman said that such a condition had not been ruled out, but had not decided upon either. Reidman said that the PCRM is ready to talk to representatives of the other four parties, but noted that so far, no one had yet approached them. He understood that the four parties first needed to finish their own coalition agreement discussions before being ready to talk to the PCRM.

¶4. (C) Reidman said that the approach of giving eight PCRM votes in support of the coalition's candidate would have to be formally approved at the PCRM plenum, which would be scheduled to take place o/a August 17. There has been some speculation that the Parliament might meet immediately after the Constitutional Court certifies the election results (the Court is scheduled to meet on August 14, so the certification could happen that same day), i.e., August 17 or 18. However, Voronin still calls the shots on setting the date for the parliament to convene, and Reidman said that he thought that the opening session of the Parliament would not happen until the very end of the 30-day legal period, which ends on August 28.

¶5. (C) Reidman noted that President Voronin would be leaving for a one-week summer vacation in Turkey, departing Moldova on August 8. Reidman also planned to take his holiday while the boss was away, and expected that many other members of

CHISINAU 00000626 002 OF 002

the government and Parliament would do likewise. The PCRM would hold its plenum after the vacation. (Although it was theoretically possible to schedule the Parliament's first earlier, and there had been rumors that the first session could be called for some time in the period before Independence Day, i.e. August 20-27, August 28 now seems the most likely day for the opening of parliament. It is likely that the new Speaker will be elected on legislative body's opening day.)

PCRM Has Not Been Contacted by the Coalition Four

¶6. (C) With respect to discussions with the four parties of the emerging non-Communist alliance, Reidman's comments paralleled those of Voronin (Reftel). He said that the PCRM is ready to talk to representatives of the other four parties, but that so far, no one had yet approached them. He understood that the four parties first needed to finish their own coalition agreement discussions before being ready to talk to the PCRM.

Comment

¶7. (C) The PCRM faction's decision indicates that many of the Communist party leaders have already come to grips with the fact the elections have given the power to the other side. While many here earlier had a cynical expectation that President Voronin would make a desperate attempt to cling to power at all costs, the opposite seems to be true. Despite the power advantages enjoyed by the incumbent, it is significant that the PCRM has not tried to use authoritarian means to stay in power. Quite the opposite, they recognize the results of the July 29 elections and acknowledge their own losses -- and are ready to let their opponents try to govern through a worsening

economic crisis.

¶ 8. (C) Should this scenario come to pass, the latest round of elections would be a significant victory for democracy itself, as we are witnessing the unfolding of a scenario in which the governing Communist party is recognizing the need to cede power and go into opposition as a result of the will of the people as expressed on Election Day. This is unusual enough in the former Soviet Union, where it has been street protests and color revolutions that have produced regime change.

¶ 9. (C) If this newly formed coalition succeeds in putting together a government, this will clearly be an historic moment of transformation for Moldova. With the Communists willing to step aside and let their opponents try their hand at ruling, it appears we have an opportunity for significant reform and change. The newly formed Alliance for European Integration may now have the opportunity to stand at the helm and try to steer the ship of Moldova in a European direction. Our colleagues from the European Union have indicated to us that they are putting together a significant package to help the country through the financial crisis after the new government has taken over. The USG should also stand ready to mobilize whatever resources possible within our assistance program options in order to support a course of reforms.

CHAUDHRY